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ND 2021-7-C

**VIA ECFS**

April 16, 2021

Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary  
Federal Communications Commission  
Office of the Secretary  
45 L Street NE  
Washington, DC 20554

Re: Section 63.71 Application of Sandhill Telephone Cooperative, Inc. for Authority to  
Grandfather Certain Services

JSI respectfully files the enclosed Application of Sandhill Telephone Cooperative,  
Inc. for Authority to Grandfather Certain Services. This filing is made in compliance with  
Section 63.71 of the Commission's rules (47 C.F.R. § 63.71).

Sincerely,

Valerie Wimer  
Vice President

on behalf of

C. Lee Chambers  
CEO/General Manager  
Sandhill Telephone Cooperative, Inc.

Enclosures

cc: Allen Mills, Sandhill Telephone Cooperative, Inc.

Fishelon Building II, Suite 200  
9430 Research Blvd., Austin, TX 78759  
phone: 512-338-0473, fax: 512-346-0822

Fagandale Corporate Center, Suite 310  
1380 Corporate Center Drive, Eagan, MN 55121  
phone: 651-452-2660, fax: 651-452-1909

3440 Blue Springs Rd. NW, Suite 503  
Kennesaw, GA 30144  
phone: 770-569-2105

547 South Oakview Lane  
Bountiful, UT 84010  
phone: 801-294-4576, fax: 801-294-5124

Before the  
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
Washington, D.C. 20554

In the Matter of	)	
	)	
Section 63.71 Application of	)	Comp. Pol. File No. _____
Sandhill Telephone Cooperative, Inc.	)	
For Authority to Grandfather	)	
Certain Services	)	

**SECTION 63.71 APPLICATION**

Pursuant to Sections 63.71 of the Commission's Rules<sup>1</sup> and Section 214(a) of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended,<sup>2</sup> Sandhill Telephone Cooperative, Inc. ("Sandhill" or the "Company") hereby files this application to grandfather the provision of low speed DS0 special access data transmission services to customers that the Company serves in the State of South Carolina ("Application").<sup>3</sup> In support of this Application, Sandhill submits the following:

**I. Information Required by Section 63.71(a)(1)-(4)**

**A. Name and Address of Carrier**

Sandhill Telephone Cooperative, Inc.  
122 South Main Street  
P.O. Box 519  
Jefferson, SC 29718

For purposes of this Application, the Commission may contact:

Allen Mills  
CABS Coordinator  
Sandhill Telephone Cooperative, Inc.  
122 South Main Street  
P.O. Box 519  
Jefferson, SC 29718  
(843) 658-6848  
allen.mills@mysandhill.net

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<sup>1</sup> See 47 C.F.R. § 63.71.

<sup>2</sup> See 47 U.S.C. § 214(a).

<sup>3</sup> As required by Section 63.71(a) of the Commission's Rules, Sandhill has notified and submitted a copy of this Application concurrent with this filing to the South Carolina Public Service Commissions, the Governor of South Carolina, and the Secretary of the Department of Defense.

**B. Date of Planned Service Discontinuance**

Sandhill will grandfather low speed DS0 special access data transmission services to its customers in the State of South Carolina on or about May 26, 2021, or upon completion of all necessary federal and state regulatory approvals. At that time, no new customers will be added and existing customers may continue their service but will be prohibited from making moves, additions and changes.

**C. Points of Geographic Areas of Service Affected**

Affected Sandhill access customers are in the Company's service area. Sandhill serves the Jefferson, McBee, Ruby, Chesterfield, Bethune, Pageland, and Patrick exchanges located in Chesterfield and Kershaw Counties in rural South Carolina.

There are no federally-recognized tribal areas in the service area affected by this Application.

**D. Brief Description of the Types of Service Affected**

In the areas referenced above, Sandhill provides the following low speed DS0 special access data transmission services which will be grandfathered, collectively, "Affected Services". All Affected Services are data services operating at speeds lower than 1.544 Mbps.

**Metallic Service**

A Metallic channel is an unconditioned two-wire channel arranged to transmit direct current and capable of transmitting low speed varying signals at rates up to 30 baud. This channel is provided by metallic or equivalent facilities. Metallic channels are provided between customer designated premises or between a customer designated premises and a Telephone Company hub or hubs where bridging functions are performed.

**Program Audio Service**

A Program Audio channel is a channel with bandwidth measured in Hz for the transmission of a complex signal voltage. The actual bandwidth is a function of the channel interface selected by the customer. Only one-way transmission is provided. Program Audio channels are provided between customer designated premises or between a customer designated premises and a Telephone Company hub.

**Video Service**

A Video channel is a channel with one-way transmission capability for a standard 525 line/60 field monochrome, or National Television Systems Committee color, video signal and one or two associated 5 or 15 kHz audio signal(s). The associated audio signal(s) may be either diplexed or provided as one or two separate channels. The provision and the bandwidth of the associated audio

signal(s) is a function of the channel interface selected by the customer. Video channels are provided between customer designated premises or between a customer designated premises and a Telephone Company hub.

#### **Voice Grade Special Access Service**

Voice Grade Service provides voice frequency transmission capability for the transmission of analog signals within an approximate bandwidth of 300 to 3000 Hz. Voice grade Service is a low speed data transport service, a transmission capability that is not dial tone voice service.

#### **Digital Data Service**

A Digital Data channel is a channel for duplex four-wire transmission of synchronous serial data at the rate of 2.4, 4.8, 9.6, 19.2, 56.0 or 64.0 kbps. The actual bit rate is a function of the channel interface selected by the customer. The channel provides a synchronous service with timing provided by the Telephone Company through the Telephone Company's facilities to the customer in the received bit stream. Digital Data channels are provided as either hubbed or non-hubbed services between customer designated premises or between a customer designated premises and a Telephone Company hub.

#### **High Capacity Service 64 kbps and below**

A High Capacity channel is a channel for the transmission of nominal 64.0 Kbps or 1.544, 3.152, 6.312, 44.736, or 274.176 Mbps isochronous serial data. The actual bit rate is a function of the channel interface selected by the customer. High Capacity channels are provided between customer designated premises or between a customer designated premises and a Telephone Company hub.

Sandhill plans to grandfather only the 64.0 kbps High Capacity Service and will continue to offer DS1 1.544 Mbps and above High Capacity Service.

The discontinuance of the Affected Services will not adversely affect the Company's current customers who have the option of moving to more current and higher speed technologies for data transmission services. Sandhill will work with affected customers to find suitable alternatives.

## **II. Brief Description of the Dates and Methods of Notice to All Affected Customers**

Sandhill sent notices by U.S. Mail on April 15, 2021 to customers that currently subscribe to Affected Services. Please reference Exhibit A which is a sample copy of the Notice sent to the affected customers.

## **III. Status of Carrier**

Sandhill is an incumbent local exchange carrier and considered a dominant carrier with respect to the services that it proposes to grandfather in the State of South Carolina.

**IV. Circumstances of Discontinuance**

The necessary equipment to continue to provide the Affected Services has become obsolete and is increasingly difficult to secure. Relatively few customers still use the Affected Services, as customers have largely migrated away from these older services to more modern options. Sandhill currently has 7 customers on these services for a total of 19 affected circuits. None of the affected customers are Residential.

**V. Certification**

On behalf of Sandhill Telephone Cooperative, Inc., I, the undersigned CEO/General Manager, C. Lee Chambers, hereby certify that the statements contained herein are true, complete and correct to the best of my knowledge and made in good faith.

**VI. Conclusion**

For the reasons stated herein, the Company respectfully requests grant of this Application.

Respectfully Submitted,



C. Lee Chambers  
CEO/General Manager  
Sandhill Telephone Cooperative, Inc.  
122 South Main Street  
P.O. Box 519  
Jefferson, SC 29718

4/15/21

Date

### CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that the foregoing Section 63.71 Application was served this 16th day of April 2021, by mailing true and correct copies thereof, postage prepaid, to the following persons at the addresses listed below.

Public Service Commission of South Carolina  
Jocelyn Boyd, Chief Clerk/Executive Director  
Synergy Business Park, Saluda Building  
101 Executive Center Drive, Suite 100  
Columbia, SC 29210

The Honorable Henry McMaster  
Office of the Governor  
1100 Gervais Street  
Columbia, South Carolina 29201

Secretary of Defense  
Attn: Special Assistant for Telecommunications,  
Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20301

*/s/ Marty Klueh*

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## EXHIBIT A

### CUSTOMER NOTICE



# SANDHILL

TELEPHONE COOPERATIVE

April 15, 2021

**Re: Important Notice of Plan to Grandfather Low Speed Special Access Services**

Dear Valued Customer:

This letter is to inform you that on or after May 26, 2021, Sandhill Telephone Cooperative, Inc. ("Sandhill") will grandfather low speed DS0 special access data transmission services within the state of South Carolina. At that time, these services will not be available to new customers, and existing customers may continue their service but may not make moves, additions and changes.

You are receiving this notice because you subscribe to one or more of the following low-speed access services which, subject to the approval of the Federal Communications Commission, will be grandfathered:

- Metallic Service
- Program Audio Service
- Video Service
- Voice Grade Special Access Service
- Digital Data Service
- High Capacity Service 64kbps and below

This grandfathering is limited to the above low speed special access services and will not affect your Sandhill service in any other way. There are newer technologies and services to use as an alternative to the grandfathered services, and we encourage you to contact us for information about migrating to an alternative service.

The FCC will normally authorize this proposed reduction of service unless it is shown that customers would be unable to receive service or a reasonable substitute from another carrier or that the public convenience and necessity is otherwise adversely affected. If you wish to object, you should file your comments as soon as possible, but no later than 10 days after the Commission releases public notice of the proposed discontinuance. You may file your comments electronically through the FCC's Electronic Comment Filing System using the docket number established in the Commission's public notice for this proceeding, or you may address them to the Federal Communications Commission, Wireline Competition Bureau, Competition Policy Division, Washington, DC 20554, and include in your comments a reference to the §63.71 Application of Sandhill Telephone Cooperative, Inc. Comments should include specific information about the impact of this proposed reduction of service upon you or your company, including any inability to acquire reasonable substitute service.

If you have any questions about this notice or Sandhill's plan to grandfather low speed special access services, please contact Sandhill at 843-658-6848.

We thank you for your business and look forward to continuing to serve your communications needs.

Sincerely,

Sandhill Telephone Cooperative, Inc.

